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# FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Media Release**

**FCO responds to Foreign Affairs Committee report, provides reassurance that it has no plans to intervene on belongership, voting rights or same sex marriage**

The Governor’s Office announced today that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) has responded formally to the report published earlier this year from the UK’s Foreign Affairs Committee (FAC) entitled “*Global Britain and the British Overseas Territories: Resetting the relationship”*.

The FCO’s response represents the UK Government’s formal response to the FAC report and covers all the FAC’s recommendations. In particular:

**Belongership**

* The FCO confirmed that the UK would continue to respect the fact that immigration decisions are primarily a matter for OT governments. This was in response to the FAC recommendation that the UK Government should initiate a consultation with the elected governments of the OTs and work with them to agree a plan to ensure that there is a pathway for all resident UK and British Overseas Territory Citizens to be able to vote and hold elected office.

**Same-sex marriage**

* The FCO also reiterated that same sex marriage is primarily a matter for the Territories to decide. The FAC report had recommended that the Government set a date by which it expected all OTs to have legalised same sex marriage. The response confirmed that the UK Government is committed to equal rights, including LGBT rights. It confirmed the Government’s belief that the strongest, safest and most prosperous societies are those in which all citizens can live freely without fear of discrimination, and where all citizens, including LGBT people, can play a full and active part in society.

A full copy of the FCO’s response to the FAC is attached.

An FCO Spokesperson said “We take our responsibilities to the OTs extremely seriously. The UK Government works hard to assist the OTs in building successful and resilient economies, improving standards of governance and protecting vulnerable groups; and providing support to aid protection of the environment. The UK’s commitment to these will not waiver”.

Notes for Editors:

**Remit of the Foreign Affairs Committee**

* The remit of the Foreign Affairs Committee's (FAC) is to examine the expenditure, administration and policy of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) and other bodies associated with the FCO such as the British Council.
* The House of Commons appoints the FAC. The FAC comprises 11 backbench MPs from Government and Opposition, to reflect the membership of the House of Commons. The current Chair of the FAC is Tom Tugendhat MP (Conservative - Tonbridge and Malling).
* The Committee chooses its own inquiries. Witnesses in an inquiry include ministers and officials from the FCO, together with a range of other witnesses depending on the nature of the inquiry.